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Dear Governor Bullock:

We, the members of Montana State Hospital Resident Council, have been concerned for some time regarding community placement. Presently, the hospital is suffering from a bottleneck caused by patients being ready for discharge and having no place to go.

All the group homes and foster-care facilities in the state are privately run. This means everyone they accept must have Medicaid. Over a third of the patients at MSH do not qualify for Medicaid, and as a result the group homes won't take them.

It costs the state approximately six hundred dollars a day to keep someone at the hospital. Because of the difficulty in discharging people into the community the state's taxpayers are spending millions of dollars unnecessarily every year. This intolerable situation doesn't have to be.

There are resources available to establish state run transitional living centers in all our communities.

Presently, the states of Washington, Utah, and North Dakota have assumed responsibility for the coordinating and administering of their mental health communities. In North Dakota the average stay at the state hospital is seven days. In Montana the average stay is significantly greater. Seattle's Transitional Resources has an average outpatient cost of \$8,282/year. Montana spends more than a hundred thousand a year for a patient to stay at the state hospital.

Our friends at N.A.M.I. Can provide your office, and the legislators with the particulars of how those states are so cost effectively dealing with their mental health communities. Montana desperately needs to join their neighbors in responsibly dealing with these issues.

Most of us are of the opinion that preexisting group homes are an excellent model for transitional living. We need many more of these throughout the state. In addition our community is in need of Apartment living centers which include sliding scale rents, work and educational opportunities, and crisis bed programs.

Your leadership on this issue is essential. Thank you for taking the time to read this, and we pray you will devote the time necessary to address this challenge and help put Montana in the vanguard of community placement for the mentally ill.

Respectfully Yours

MSH Resident Council

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CHILDREN & FAMILIES INTERIM COMMITTEE  
May 9, 2014  
Exhibit 19